

How to Use INDEX MATCH Across Excel Sheets to Retrieve Data

Authored by
stats writer

January 24, 2026

RECOMMENDED CITATION

stats writer (2026). *How to Use INDEX MATCH Across Excel Sheets to Retrieve Data*. PSYCHOLOGICAL SCALES. Retrieved from <https://scales.arabpsychology.com/?p=127462>

The combination of the INDEX and MATCH functions represents one of the most powerful and flexible lookup methods available in Excel. Unlike simpler functions like VLOOKUP, INDEX MATCH allows users to precisely retrieve data from any column within a specific range, regardless of the lookup column's position. This flexibility becomes even more critical when managing large workbooks, especially when performing lookups across separate worksheets.

The ability to utilize INDEX MATCH across multiple sheets in Excel transforms the way complex data analysis and organization are handled. By effectively referencing cells and ranges located on different sheets, users can seamlessly connect disparate datasets within the same workbook. This cross-sheet referencing capability eliminates the need for manual navigation or redundant copying of information, significantly increasing efficiency and ensuring the integrity of the centralized data source.

Excel: Use INDEX MATCH from Another Sheet

Understanding the Core Syntax for Cross-Sheet Lookups

When performing a lookup operation that spans across two or more worksheets in an Excel workbook, the fundamental structure of the formula remains the same, but the range arguments must be prefixed with the sheet name followed by an exclamation mark (the sheet reference operator). This syntax is crucial for unambiguously pointing to the source data. The syntax below illustrates how to construct an INDEX MATCH lookup designed to pull information from a sheet named **Sheet2** into the current sheet.

The standard syntax used in Excel for employing **INDEX MATCH** from a separate worksheet is as follows:

```
=INDEX(Sheet2!$B$2:$C$11,MATCH(A2,Sheet2!$A$2:$A$11,0),2)
```

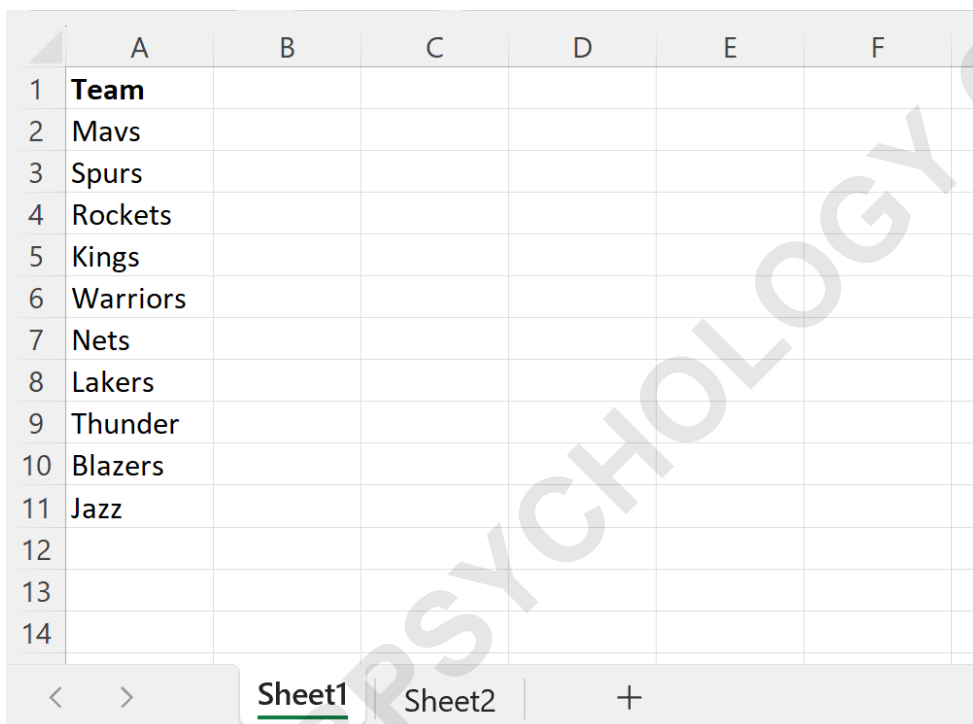
This specific formula is designed to execute a precise vertical lookup. It first takes the value contained within cell **A2** of the current sheet (the lookup value) and searches for an exact match within the designated lookup column range, **A2:A11**, located on **Sheet2**. Once the row number corresponding to the match is identified by the **MATCH** function, the **INDEX** function uses this row number to return a corresponding value from the defined return array, **B2:C11**, also on **Sheet2**. The final argument, **2**, specifically instructs the function to retrieve the value from the second column within that return array.

Setting Up the Example Workbook (Source and Destination Data)

To fully grasp the practical application of this cross-sheet lookup method, consider a common

scenario involving two related but distinct datasets within a single workbook. We will establish two sheets: **Sheet1**, which serves as our destination sheet containing the list of lookup values (basketball team names), and **Sheet2**, which acts as our source sheet containing the detailed performance data (points and assists) corresponding to those teams.

Suppose we have the following destination sheet, named **Sheet1**, which currently holds the identifiers--the names of various basketball teams--in Column A. Our objective is to populate Column B with relevant statistics retrieved from our source sheet, using these team names as the unique key.



| | A | B | C | D | E | F |
|----|-------------|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Team | | | | | |
| 2 | Mavs | | | | | |
| 3 | Spurs | | | | | |
| 4 | Rockets | | | | | |
| 5 | Kings | | | | | |
| 6 | Warriors | | | | | |
| 7 | Nets | | | | | |
| 8 | Lakers | | | | | |
| 9 | Thunder | | | | | |
| 10 | Blazers | | | | | |
| 11 | Jazz | | | | | |
| 12 | | | | | | |
| 13 | | | | | | |
| 14 | | | | | | |

Furthermore, assume we possess the comprehensive source sheet, named **Sheet2**, which contains the complete performance records, including columns for team name, points scored, and assists made. It is critical that the lookup column on **Sheet2** (Column A, containing the team names) is structured identically to the lookup column on **Sheet1** to ensure accurate matching.

| | A | B | C | D | E | F |
|----|-------------|---------------|----------------|---|---|---|
| 1 | Team | Points | Assists | | | |
| 2 | Kings | 22 | 4 | | | |
| 3 | Spurs | 14 | 9 | | | |
| 4 | Mavs | 19 | 8 | | | |
| 5 | Rockets | 30 | 3 | | | |
| 6 | Warriors | 24 | 12 | | | |
| 7 | Lakers | 28 | 17 | | | |
| 8 | Thunder | 35 | 3 | | | |
| 9 | Nets | 17 | 6 | | | |
| 10 | Blazers | 12 | 10 | | | |
| 11 | Jazz | 23 | 12 | | | |
| 12 | | | | | | |
| 13 | | | | | | |
| 14 | | | | | | |

Step-by-Step: Retrieving Specific Data (Assists Example)

Our goal in this primary example is to perform a lookup for each team name listed in **Sheet1**, find that team's corresponding entry in **Sheet2**, and retrieve the value specifically from the **Assists** column in **Sheet2**. This operation requires careful definition of the return array and the column index argument within the **INDEX** component of the formula.

To achieve this, navigate to cell **B2** on **Sheet1** (the first cell where the retrieved data will be placed). In this cell, we input the following formula, ensuring all references to the source sheet, **Sheet2**, are correctly included with absolute referencing (using the **\$** sign) to prevent range shifting when the formula is copied:

```
=INDEX(Sheet2!$B$2:$C$11,MATCH(A2,Sheet2!$A$2:$A$11,0),2)
```

Once the formula is entered into cell **B2**, the user must apply it to the remaining cells in Column B. This is most efficiently accomplished by clicking and dragging the fill handle located at the bottom-right corner of cell **B2** down the column until it aligns with the last team name in Column A. This action copies the formula while maintaining the necessary absolute references to the source data ranges on **Sheet2**, while allowing the lookup value (**A2**, **A3**, etc.) to adjust dynamically.

B2 \times \checkmark *fx* =INDEX(Sheet2!\$B\$2:\$C\$11,MATCH(A:

| | A | B | C | D | E | F |
|----|-------------|----------------|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Team | Assists | | | | |
| 2 | Mavs | 8 | | | | |
| 3 | Spurs | 9 | | | | |
| 4 | Rockets | 3 | | | | |
| 5 | Kings | 4 | | | | |
| 6 | Warriors | 12 | | | | |
| 7 | Nets | 6 | | | | |
| 8 | Lakers | 17 | | | | |
| 9 | Thunder | 3 | | | | |
| 10 | Blazers | 10 | | | | |
| 11 | Jazz | 12 | | | | |
| 12 | | | | | | |
| 13 | | | | | | |
| 14 | | | | | | |

< > Sheet1 Sheet2 +

Analyzing the Resulting Data Structure

Upon successful execution of the drag-and-fill operation, Column B in **Sheet1** is now populated with the values derived from the **Assists** column on **Sheet2**. This result confirms that the cross-sheet **INDEX MATCH** function has correctly identified the row for each basketball team name and extracted the corresponding numerical statistic, thereby effectively merging the required performance data onto the destination sheet.

It is important to reiterate the function of the final argument in the **INDEX** formula: the number **2**. This index number dictates which column within the specified return range (**Sheet2!\$B\$2:\$C\$11**) should have its value returned. Since the return range begins with Points (Column B) as column 1 and Assists (Column C) as column 2, the argument **2** ensures that the **Assists** data is consistently retrieved.

Modifying the Formula to Retrieve Different Columns (Points Example)

A key advantage of using the **INDEX MATCH** combination over other lookup methods is the effortless ability to change which column of data is returned without needing to restructure the lookup or match arguments. If the requirement changes--for instance, if we now need to retrieve the values from the **Points** column instead of the Assists column--only one small modification is

necessary.

To retrieve the Points data, we simply adjust the column index argument (the last number in the formula) from **2** to **1**. This directs the **INDEX** function to return the value from the first column within the specified array **Sheet2!\$B\$2:\$C\$11**, which corresponds precisely to the **Points** column on the source sheet.

The revised formula used to return the value from the **Points** column is:

=INDEX(Sheet2!\$B\$2:\$C\$11,MATCH(A2,Sheet2!\$A\$2:\$A\$11,0),1)

Applying this updated formula across Column B of **Sheet1** will immediately update the retrieved results. Column B will now display the corresponding score from the **Points** column on **Sheet2** for each listed team name, demonstrating the inherent flexibility and power of the **INDEX MATCH** construction in handling dynamic lookup requirements.

| | A | B | C | D | E | F |
|----|-------------|---------------|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Team | Points | | | | |
| 2 | Mavs | 19 | | | | |
| 3 | Spurs | 14 | | | | |
| 4 | Rockets | 30 | | | | |
| 5 | Kings | 22 | | | | |
| 6 | Warriors | 24 | | | | |
| 7 | Nets | 17 | | | | |
| 8 | Lakers | 28 | | | | |
| 9 | Thunder | 35 | | | | |
| 10 | Blazers | 12 | | | | |
| 11 | Jazz | 23 | | | | |
| 12 | | | | | | |
| 13 | | | | | | |
| 14 | | | | | | |

Advanced Considerations for Cross-Sheet Formulas

While the basic syntax presented here is highly reliable, generating powerful cross-sheet formulas requires careful attention to detail, particularly regarding absolute versus relative referencing. Always use absolute references (e.g., **\$A\$2:\$A\$11**) for your lookup array and return array ranges

on the source sheet (**Sheet2**). This prevents errors when the formula is copied down or across the destination sheet (**Sheet1**).

Furthermore, ensure that the final argument of the **MATCH** function is set to **0**, which forces an exact match lookup. Unless your data is perfectly sorted and you intend to perform an approximate match, using **0** is essential for accurate data retrieval based on unique identifiers like names or IDs.

Further Resources for Excel Proficiency

Mastering cross-sheet lookups is a significant step toward becoming proficient in Excel data management. For those looking to expand their capabilities, the following operations represent other common and valuable skills to acquire in spreadsheet analysis:

Techniques for dynamic range naming to simplify cross-sheet references.

Methods for handling multiple criteria lookups using helper columns or array formulas.

Understanding the benefits and limitations of using XLOOKUP (in modern Excel versions) compared to the traditional **INDEX MATCH** combination.

The following tutorials explain how to perform other common operations in Excel: